No 16

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An Inaugural Dissertation

on

The Use of Cathartics.

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Cathartics are defined those substances, which quicken and increase the evacuation from the Intestines by stool. —

Medicines of this class have been employed ever since the first dawn of Physic, and have been administered, with different views and intentions, according to the prevailing theories of the times, or the favorite doctrines of individuals. Thus the judicial astrologers used them at particular time of the moon, and according to the junction and opposition of the planets. The Humoral pathologists gave Cathartics with the intention of expelling peccant matter, which had been separated from the mass of fluids, by the process of fermentation. But these theories are now, almost entirely exploded from practice. Modern practitioners have two objects in view in the exhibition of Purgative medicines: the one is to empty the bowels of their contents, which are in a manner, extraneous to the body, and completely out of the circulation; the other is to cause a greater secretion of fluids into the cavity of the intestines. These substances have thus been divided into two classes. those which produce the former effects are denominated Laxatives or Eccoprotics, and the latter Purgatives, the more active of which are called Drastic Purgatives. —

The action of a Cathartic on the alimentary canal, may be considered as threefold. In the first place, it stimulates the muscular fibres of the intestines, and increases their natural peristaltic action, by which their present contents are more quickly discharged. Secondly,

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It stimulates their exhalent vessels, and causes them to pour out a more copious secretion of fluids, and also the excretory ducts of the mucous glands, by which means, the stools are rendered not only quicker, but thinner and more abundant. Thirdly, the stools are much more copious by an additional quantity of fluids, secreted by the Liver, Pancreas &c. And fourthly, the local becomes a general stimulant, hence the increased action of the absorbents and the advantages derived from of this class in certain diseases. Whether Cathartics act in this way in the cure of those diseases is still a matter of doubt. The opinion is supported by the most respectable authorities, that they act by diminishing the quantity of circulating fluids and thus promoting absorption. —

From this consideration of the effects of Cathartics on the system, their utility in some diseases, and their injurious tendency in others, as well as the necessity of varying their degree of activity will be readily understood. Taking into consideration the length of the intestines, as well as the number of vessels, and the ducts of the mucous follicles, and the larger ducts from the Liver, Pancreas &c. opening on their surface, it will be obvious that Purgatives, by opening all these outlets, must occasion a very great general evacuation and consequent diminution of the fluids of the body. Hence in acute inflammatory diseases, in which overdistention of the blood vessels is to be avoided, this evacuation is an excellent expedient, and forms a principal part of the Antiphlogistic plan

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of treatment. It also seems that by purging, another inappreciable advantage is obtained by a change in the distribution of the fluids; thus if an evacuation be made from one set of vessels, the afflux of fluids to these will be increased, and consequently the quantity distributed to other parts of the system will be diminished. Upon this principle we are enabled to explain, in some measure, the beneficial effects derived from Purgatives in the diseases of the head, dependent on congestion, and their injurious tendency in inflammation of the bowels. —

Whenever the contents of the intestines are morbidly retained from whatever cause, the administration of Cathartics is indicated. If constipation is attended with a flaccid habit, or much flatulence, and irregular distention of the abdomen, some of the warmer Cathartics should be given. But if there is a deficiency of bile, a mercurial purge is most proper. In those cases where costiveness is accompanied with more acute symptoms, as violent pain in Colic, or with pain, ~~tenesmus~~ and bloody or slimy stools, as in Dysentery, or with pain and acute fever as in inflammation of the bowels, Cathartics though necessary must be varied in their nature and mode of administration. For instance in Colic, they should not be used, until the spasmodic constriction has been overcome by opiates, or the turgid state of the blood vessels is diminished by venaesection. In Dysentery they should

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be alternated with opiates, otherwise the irritation they produce will counterbalance the good effects of the evacuation. In Enteritis the irritation will tend to increase the inflammation and constriction, if they be employed before blood-letting and other remedies have reduced the inflammation.

Cathartics are also indicated, by worms generated in the intestines.—

Cathartics, either purgative or laxative doses are useful in several other affections, partly by exciting the intestines to vacuation, and partly by extending their stimulus to the neighbouring viscera of the abdomen, as in Jaundice and suppression of the menses.

Another important indication, which Cathartics are capable of fulfilling is, increasing the action of the absorbents. Whether they do this by diminishing arterial action, or by exerting a stimulant effect, these aspects them selves is a matter of doubt. It appears, in some measure, to be owing to each of these, and thus we explain the manner in which Cathartics are useful in effusions of fluids into the different cavities of the body.— In Gastritis it is much better to administer these remedies, by way of injection, as they will not irritate the already inflamed stomach, so much, as they would by direct application. — —

Having taken this view of the operation of Cathartics, we shall now proceed to consider more fully their application as remedies to the cure of diseases, and those which naturally present themselves first are the Class of Pyrexiæ, and the first of these are the Fevers.

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[illegible] of [illegible]

[illegible] of [illegible]

[illegible] & [illegible], which [illegible] not meet with [illegible]

objection [illegible] the attempt [illegible]

[illegible] Fevers [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] that [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] the [illegible].

The first that we should consider is the Typhoid Febricula or Yellow Fever, [illegible] Rush [illegible]

the [illegible], [illegible] the [illegible]

[illegible] with

[illegible] the

[illegible] influence the

[illegible] of [illegible]!

In Inflammatory Fevers, [illegible] must be of the most importance

[illegible]

[illegible] other [illegible] the effect of [illegible]

[illegible].

[illegible] Fenner, I think there was much truth in what he said [illegible]

[illegible] It has been a [illegible] the people [illegible] to be [illegible]

[illegible] appeals [illegible] be prevented altogether. It is obvious that

[illegible] the [illegible] the flies are [illegible] this [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

With respect to the [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] This has been attributed to actual [illegible]

[illegible] increased more rather [illegible] less. [illegible] the [illegible]

power of [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] tracheotomy combined

with this disease. Cynanche Trachealis is now generally treated

with large doses of [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible]

of the [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] not much credit is given to

bathing in the [illegible] [illegible] from [illegible]

[illegible] but at the same [illegible]

[illegible] to an Quadrates together

[illegible]

Profesjor

Professor [illegible] says that [illegible] more [illegible] the [illegible] part of the [illegible] surges and blood letting. [illegible] the [illegible] greatest [illegible] He makes [illegible]

[illegible] to produce artificial [illegible] Professor [illegible]

[illegible]

Extraneous. [illegible] for it appears that the [illegible] on the appearance of the [illegible] Professor [illegible] that [illegible] nor are they less efficacious in Experiments. Scientific [illegible]

[illegible] He administered purgatives, at all [illegible] of

[illegible] large [illegible] to [illegible] the usual [illegible]

[illegible] continued [illegible]

[illegible] person [illegible] how useful [illegible]

[illegible] Ipecacuanha sometimes [illegible]

[illegible] various [illegible] the [illegible]

the case [illegible] should [illegible] to discharge

the contents of the [illegible]

[illegible]

Haemorrhages. In active Haemorrhages, which [illegible]

perhaps every disease of the [illegible]

the antiphlogistic treatment should not be neglected [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] — In

Haemorrhage large [illegible]

[illegible] of [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] given to [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] There [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Sensitiveness of the nerves or tortor of the skin [illegible]

[illegible]

Exoftiness. [illegible]

[illegible]

Having seen how [illegible]

e Neuroses. So intimately is the connection [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] this being [illegible] frequently [illegible]

[illegible]

Observation. [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Becoming [illegible] found [illegible] always [illegible] but persons [illegible] to [illegible] Professor [illegible] [illegible] the market of breaking Porcelain after the old modes with [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] his most dangerous horse so that he has long been [illegible] the art of breaking the [illegible]

[illegible]

Adynamia Dyspepsia seems to arise from [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] of the most drastic cathartics so that the effect [illegible] may [illegible] One of the [illegible] the Bilious Flatulent and Hysteric in each of which the [illegible]

Purgatives are also very useful in [illegible] The [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Black Hellebore [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

The second is Hydrocele [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]